1: Burrows--102-103 (1947-48) Woleaians 1-3
116, 597, 162 Ifalik

"One of the striking characteristics of the social organization of Ifalik is the prevalence of adoption. Spiro worked out an estimate of the number of people in the population less than 20 years old. (As they do not keep track of chronological ages, this had to be based on relative ages.) The total came to 81. Of these, 32, or 39.5% had been adopted. A corresponding percentage for the older people was not worked out. (This would have been more difficult as adoption among them is less widely remembered.) However, as we see no reason to suspect a change in the prevalence of adoption, the estimate for the younger people probably indicates fairly well the proportion of adoptions in the population as a whole.

A request for a child is usually made before its birth. A childless mother (or even one who has children, but wants another) will ask a pregnant woman for her baby. Such a request may be refused, but custom exerts pressure in favor of granting it. Negotiations for adoption may also begin after the birth of a child, when someone takes a fancy to it. Although the negotiations seem to be conducted by the women, their husbands share in a decision about [103] giving or taking a child. In talking about adoption with men, adopted children were commonly referred to as the vam (adopted child) of the adopting father.

The adopting parents prepare to feed the mother after the birth of the child, in order that she may have plenty of milk. The adopting mother makes a special planting in her taro patch. When the expectant mother goes to the birth house to be delivered of the

child, the adopted father goes fishing to provide food for her. Traditionally, he is expected to 'keep the fire going in the earth oven for 10 days', in order to feed the mother. Actually, the earth oven, the ancient way of cooking, is only used nowadays for cooking in greater quantities than usual, as when a turtle or large fish is caught. If a child is requested after his birth, the adopting parents are still under an obligation to give food, which then takes the form of a present to the biological parents.

Acquiring a new set of relatives by adoption does not mean renouncing the old ones. When adoption is within the lineage, it is only the parents who are changed, joint family and clan remaining the same. This is said to be the preferred kind of adoption. But the rule is not always observed. Adoption even from another clan is not uncommon. Six cases were noted in my preliminary census. Spiro's genealogical study later revealed many cases of adoption of which I was not told when taking the census, so adoptions without the clan are undoubtedly much more numerous than that.

When adopted into another household, a child's home is primarily with its adopting parents. But it knows perfectly well who its original parents were, visits freely with them, and may spend the night at their house whenever it cares to. When adopted into another clan, it acquires something like a double clan membership. It may not marry either in the clan into which it was born or in that into which it was adopted.

One of the functions of adoption is to express and reinforce good-will between two

families. Another one, obviously, is to continue a lineage which otherwise would become extinct."

1: Burrows--126 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 431, 597 Ifalik

"Adoption, we have seen, does involve gifts of food from the parents who receive the child to those who give it. Tom's way of telling it made it a more individual affair, -- an obligation of the adopting father to the biological mother, just after the birth of a child already bespoken for adoption. Characteristically, this is not thought of as payment for the child, but only as a contribution to the mother, so that she may have plenty of milk to make the child grow and thrive. The gift of a child, like any gift in Ifalik, does confer an obligation; but not one that can be liquidated by payment of a specified price. These obligations are more like the social obligations than the economic ones of our culture. No one transaction can be final. Each is a step in a relationship that is expected to continue, and one of the principal motives involved is the maintenance of good will."

28: Spiro--31 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1 -2
116, 597 Ifalik

"An obtrusive, but integral part of the entire fabric of kinship, one that is well-nigh universal in the Pacific, is the institution of adoption. (aevan) The incidence of adoption is fairly high, there being 32 aevams in Ifaluk, out of 81 children. There are basically two reasons for adoption. If the couple is childless, they wish to have a baby, because 'only they chow.' That is, being without children, they eat their meals alone, which is to say, they are lonesome. Secondly, a couple with only one child may desire a child of another sex, a girl to work the taro patch, a boy to do the men's work. If they decide to adopt a child they go to a pregnant woman of either the husband's or wife's clan, never to a non-clan member, and inform her that they would like to adopt her baby. If the woman has no other children, she may refuse the request, but if she has children, she does not, because 'all people and chief very angry at her,' though she may not be compelled to part from her child. However, the natives know of no cases of refusal, for the woman always cooperates, as she says, 'I give to you, bout (because) I am very very sorry to you.' The adopting parents give no gift or any symbolic offering to the parents of the child.

The mother of the infant, of course, feeds it. When she leaves the birth-hut, she is accompanied by the foster-mother, who spends much time in the home of her adopted

son. At the end of the three month period, during which time the mother and infant are confined to the house, the baby is taken to the home of its foster parents by its mother, both returning home in the evening. When the infant can walk it remains permanently in the home of its foster parents."

28: Spiro--31-32 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 597 Ifalik

"The aevam is treated as one's own child and the patterns of interaction, both formal and informal are identical for him as for a biological child. The child, however, is by no means abandoned by its real parents, the relationship being a close one in both cases. Since the atoll is small, it is possible for an adopted child to see its real parents daily. Actually, then, adoption means that the child has four parents, instead of two, and two houses instead of one. Talimedja, for example, joked about his having two families, so that if he were hungry he could eat in either house, if he were dissatisfied with the fare in one. The same is true of other activities. The aevam may sleep in either house, may expect to receive shelter, protection, security from either one.[32]

This dual interactional pattern applies to his entire life. He belongs to two kinship groups, his 'natural' one and his foster one. This means that he has not only the incest taboos of his biological siblings, but also those of his foster siblings. Despite his belonging to two kin groups, he inherits only from his natural group, not his foster group."

28: Spiro--32 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 597 Ifalik

"Though the cultural or institutionalised pattern of interaction between aevam and foster duplicates that of biological child-parent, the quality of the relationship displays variations. Some foster children are much more intimate with their foster parents than with their biological parents. But, on the other hand, there are instances in which the converse is true. Talimedja, a boy in his middle teens, almost always referred to his biological mother when he spoke of his mother. When I asked him to take me to his home, he took me to the home of his biological mother. On the other hand, Morolivok, a boy in his late teens, always referred to his foster parents as his parents, and he and his foster brother were inseparable. But Tom, who is his foster-father, definitely makes a distinction between him and his biological son, Alemwal. When Tom speaks of 'my son', he invariably means Alemwal. This distinction comes out in behavior as well. When I administered a battery of tests to Morolivok, Tom asked him to sit on the ground besides us. When Alemwal came to take the tests, Tom insisted that he sit with us on the mat. These subtle manifestations, I am sure, are unintentional, and unconscious, and if he were asked, Tom would say that he loved both sons equally."

The households varied greatly in size, from one which included only one old man and one old woman, to another (Falepenach) which had twenty-six persons. The household system was matrilineal, and when a man married he moved into the household to which his wife belonged. In the matter of what belonged to which household, a man generally seemed to know much more about the household of his mother than about the household of his wife, even though he had been living in the latter for many years. There was considerable informal movement among the households—people sometimes eating and sleeping regularly in a household to which they didn't really "belong"—which introduced a considerable element of confusion into the census making. This informality plus clan relationships and other family ties meant that labor was not strictly apportioned by household—the two old people who officially represented the smallest household were as well looked after as old people would be in a household with numerous members. Everyone really "belonged" to the whole island.

This matter of "belonging" had been on my mind ever since reading that thought-provoking short novel by Carson McCullers, *Member of the Wedding*. The "security" of the children of Ifaluk impressed us from the very beginning. Every child was a member not only of a family and a household, but of the whole island society. A child crying would be comforted by the nearest adult. Curiously, the children, though "secure", were far from obnoxious—in fact it would be difficult to imagine a more delightful bunch of kids. The "sibling rivalry" that seems to plague every American household was conspicuous by its absence—the mannerly, non-aggressive character of Ifaluk society extended even to the five-year-olds.

The security of the children of Ifaluk is probably still further increased by the widespread system of adoption. Ted found that over a third of the children of the island had been "adopted" by couples who were not their biological parents. When a couple for some reason wish another child, they go to a pregnant woman (who must be of the clan of either the adopting father or adopting mother) and ask if they may adopt the child when it is born. The request, it is said, is never refused. The adopting mother goes to the birth house with the real mother—all children are born in a special house, which is taboo to men—and stays there while the baby is born. The biological mother keeps the baby

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

590 844 until it is able to walk, but the adopting mother shares the care and affections from the beginning; and when the baby is able to walk, it moves officially into the household of the adopting parents.

593 599 The child thus really acquires an extra set of parents, since it continues all through life to have close association with its real parents as well as with its adopting parents. The child acquires extra sets of "brothers" and "sisters" as well. Don found some difficulty with the word "brother" in teaching English since, while the Ifalukians all knew who were blood brothers and who were not, the matter seemed of little importance to them.

Our friend Yani, for instance, and his wife, Letaweriur, had three children. His oldest had been adopted into his mother's household, Soumat, and his next into his father's household (since his father was a re-married widower with no children by the second wife). Only the youngest had he kept to himself. Yet Yani was with all of his children every day. In this case, Yani and his wife, although [illegible]y officially belonged in her household, Falepenach, spent most of their time in the Soumat household, since it was less crowded. This sort of casualness gave us a great deal of trouble with that census.

126 133 489 But this is straying from the problem of trying to get the Falarik trails down on the base map. With the broad highway and the canoe houses as fixed points of reference, we started to map the principal trails across the island. Falarik was a crescent, following the curve of the circular atoll reef; it was a little over a mile long, with an average width of about 300 yards. There were a dozen or so trails across the island from the inhabited, lagoon side, to the outer, ocean side.

The first of these, taking off from the canoe house beside the Fan Nap, began as a "highway" rather than a "trail." Like the broad highway, it was a wide, straight path, marked on both sides by lines of moss-covered coral rocks. On the left side of this trail was the dense vegetation of Katelu, the sacred site of the ancient Men's House which [178] was in use in the time of Maur, the island's "culture hero." This sacred spot was never entered by anyone except Maroligar, who was its official custodian. As a result, it was a wild tangle of natural vegetation. At one point on the path by Katelu was a large, fresh-water pool in [243] which Fagolier, the paramount chief, sometimes bathed. On the right